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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TWO SUNNI ARABS WITHDRAW FROM CONSTITUTION
COMMITTEE

Classified By: Charge D' Affaires David M. Satterfield for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

1. (C) Poloff confirmed July 14 that two of the fifteen Sunni Arabs recently added to the constitution drafting committee have withdrawn themselves from the process. One of the men, Dr. Muhammad Mahrus al-Mudaris al-Athami, who is affiliated with the Sunni Conference, had previously complained of health problems and requested that his name be withdrawn from consideration. The other, Dr. Wisam Sabri al-Ani, affiliated with the National Dialogue Council, had threatened earlier to withdraw because he believed adding specifically "Sunni Arabs" to the committee would only further inflame sectarian tensions.

2. (C) One newspaper report claimed that both men withdrew because they had received threatening letters, but some of their colleagues on the committee told Poloff July 14 that there was more to the story. Iraqi Islamic Party leader Ayad al-Samarai, also an added member, had reminded Poloff on July 12 of both men's previous complaints and said he believed neither man in the end wanted to put in the work. Shaykh Muhammad Tahir al-Abid Rabbo al-Jaburi, another recent Sunni Arab addition to the committee, downplayed to Poloff the damage caused by the withdrawal and said both men would be quickly replaced.

3. (C) Shaykh al-Jaburi told Poloff that he expected that he and his colleagues would draw from the already-nominated 13 Sunni Arab "expert advisors" in order to find replacement candidates. He mentioned Dr. Dhamin Hasan Aleiwi, affiliated with the National Dialogue Council, as one previously nominated expert who could simply be promoted to become a member. Al-Jaburi also said that some of his colleagues were considering nominating Abd al-Nasser Al-Janabi to fill one of the spots. Janabi is a controversial tribal shaykh affiliated with the National Dialogue Council who claims close ties to the insurgency.

4. (C) COMMENT: We will watch closely to ensure that the process of replacing these two members does not re-open any of the negotiations we just finally completed. One of the new members will likely come from the ranks of the "Sunni Conference," a front uniting the Islamic Party and Sunni Waqf, while the other will come from the National Dialogue Council. Poloff urged al-Jaburi and Samarai to draw from names already on their expert roster rather than seek out new personalities like Shaykh Abd al-Nasser al-Janabi. The last thing this process needs is for the committee to begin debating personalities again just when it has finally gotten down to its most serious work. Jaburi said he agreed that quick progress was needed, and we expect to hear of the new nominees in the coming few days. These two vacancies will be filled, but the threat of future withdrawals over substantive disputes remains and will bear close watching.

5. (U) REO HILLA, REO BASRA, REO MOSUL, and REO KIRKUK, minimize considered.
Satterfield